(a) whether the Ministry's proposal that old scheme of appointing Judges by the Executive authority has been opposed by the Bar Associations and also the Judiciary;

(b) whether the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice has suggested that appointment of higher judiciary should be made transparent, so as to ensure that only deserving candidates make it to the Bench;

(c) whether the Committee has also recommended that in order to bring down arrears of cases, the number of Judges in the Supreme Court be raised to 31, instead of 26 at present; and

(d) whether any final decision has been taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill 2008, which seeks to increase the number of Supreme Court Judges from 26 to 31, is pending for consideration in the Lok Sabha.

Laws related to rape cases

1464. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:
SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE:
Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether, in the month of October, a High Court urged Government to frame laws that heal scars of rape;

(b) if so, whether number of rape cases that had gone to various High Courts, have impressed upon the Government that there should be stringent laws to deal with the rape cases, so that such cases are checked; and

(c) whether a large number of Judges has suggested that steps should be taken by legislation to rehabilitate rape victims?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) to (c) No information regarding observation of any High Court on framing laws that deal with healing the scars of rape or impressing upon Government that there should be stringent laws to deal with rape has been communicated to Government. The Government has introduced the Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2006 which *inter-alia* contains a proposal regarding, payment of compensation and rehabilitation of victims, including victims of rape.

Coverage of Supreme Court and High Court under RTI Act

1465. SHRI DARA SINGH:
SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL:
Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry has opined that the Right to Information Act (RTI) does not cover the Supreme Court and High Court Judges, whereas the Act itself does not exempt such constitutional bodies;